A New World Record

Anna Wells, Executive Editor, IMPO

This article first appeared in IMPO's October 2012 *[1]issue.*

We wore pedometers and tried to make the walking into a game, but after three days and 35,000 steps (over 17 miles!), it was a little less fun to see those digits tick as I trekked across Chicago's McCormick Place for September's IMTS (International Manufacturing Technology Show) 2012. I don't care if they don't go with my dress clothes: next time, I'm wearing my hot pink Nike running shoes.

Luckily, the IMTS show was worth it. With registrants totaling over 100,000 and 1,800 exhibitors, the floors of this beast were buzzing with custom products and solutions ranging from your classic machine tools to the most advanced in process controllers.

One of the more unique booth visits I had the pleasure of participating in was arranged by the 3D imaging software and metrology company Geomagic – but it wasn't your typical software demo.

The Geomagic booth had a very special group of visitors from North American Eagle, an organization comprised of a group and men and women who are attempting to build the world's fastest automobile and break the landspeed record (currently 763 MPH and held by the British).

Ed Shadle, the lead driver and project manager, told us about how his vision to bring the landspeed record back to the USA has been centered around an F-104 fighter fuselage. Ed and Keith Zanghi, North American Eagle's director of operations, explained how the group took this proven design and attempted to convert it into something they could actually use. Eventually the fuselage was engineered into the 56-foot long car with the intention to take it to their goal of 771 MPH (For more information, visit www.landspeed.com).

The team has been doubling its efforts in 2012 as it prepares to take the vehicle over 600 MPH this October. More advanced telemetry, high speed parachutes, and unprecedented magnetic brakes have all contributed to the development of the vehicle, and companies like Geomagic helped with the 3D imaging. Eagle Machine of Abottsford, BC has machined the solid aluminum billet wheels used on the North American Eagle, and countless sponsors have donated time, money, and manpower.

Despite having been fully dedicated to this project since 1997, Ed and Keith do not waver in their enthusiasm as the years go by. As the two relayed the details of their mission, they had no trouble convincing me that their passion and drive was to be

an endless source of motivation as this decades-spanning project moves forward.

I thought about Ed and Keith when I read this month's submission from regular IMPO columnist, Mike Collins (page 42). This month Mike talks about the value of "right-brained" thinking, analyzing the argument outlined in Daniel Pink's book, A Whole New Mind. Collins uses one of Pink's points about the importance of finding meaning and applies it to the manufacturing space – most notably how important it is to emphasize meaning when attempting to attract and recruit young people into manufacturing jobs. What I love about the North American Eagle project is the number of moving parts – the people, technology, brains, and brawn – that all contribute to this bigger picture.

We all have a bigger picture to think about, even on those days where our jobs feel tedious. With this macro view in mind, Collins asks us to assist young people in mapping out their careers as a path to putting meaning at the forefront of the skills gap issue. This could show new workers how they can meet their monetary and/or upward mobility goals through skills training and job development.

There is a long term outlook to keep in mind. Just as it takes years to build a winning automobile, the same applies to a winning workforce. Maybe it's time to put the pedal to the metal.

Where do you derive your meaning? What is your motivation to do a great job every day? Email me at anna.wells@advantagemedia.com *[2].*

Source URL (retrieved on *09/19/2014 - 10:35pm*):
http://www.impomag.com/blogs/2012/10/new-world-record?qt-most_popular=0

Links:
[1] http://e-ditionsbyfry.com/Olive/ODE/IMP/Default.aspx?href=IMP/2012/10/01&?EmailAddrr=@{delivery_email}@
[2] mailto:anna.wells@advantagemedia.com